

A
PARAPHRASE
AND
EXPOSITION
of the Propheſie of
SAINT PETER,

Concerning the day of CHRIST'S
ſecond Coming,

Deſcribed in the third Chapter of his
ſecond EPISTLE.

AS ALSO,

How the CONFLAGRATION, or De-
ſtruction of the WORLD by fire, (whereof
Saint Peter ſpeaks) and eſpecially of
the HEAVENS, iſto be
underſtood,

BY

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A PARAPHRASE
AND
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of the Propheſie of
SAINT PETER,
Concerning the day of *CHRISTS* ſecond
Coming,

On the third Chapter of the ſecond
EPISTLE.

Verſe 1, 2.

Saint Peter exhorteth the believing Jews, unto whom he writes to be mindful of the words of the holy Prophets, (a) Elay, Daniel, & Malachi, concerning the coming of *Chriſt* to judgment, & the reſtauration then promiſed, it being alſo confirmed by the Apoſtles of our Lord and Saviour.

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Verſe

Verſe. 3, 4.

For howſoever it were then believed both by Jews & Chriſtized Gentiles, yet in the laſt dayes ſhould come thoſe, who walking after their own deſires (or humours) ſhould deny and deride the expectation of any ſuch promiſe (b) of what day of Chriſt, ſaying, Where is the promiſe (c) of his coming? Where is the new heaven and new earth you talk of?

(b) This *ἡσχάτος τῶν ἡμερῶν*, or laſt dayes, ſhould ſeem to be the time of the Churches Apoſtaſie under Antichriſt, according to that of Saint Paul, 1 Tim. 4. 1. In the latter times ſome ſhall depart from the faith, giving heed to ſpirits of error, & doctrines of demons. For as the times of the fourth and laſt of Daniels Kingdoms were the laſt times in general, during

which Chriſt was to come, and found his Church and Kingdome: So the latter times of the fourth Kingdome, being the period of a time, times, and halfe a time, wherein the wicked horn ſhould domineere, are the lateſt times of the laſt times, or laſt times in ſpeciall.

(c) I take *Promiſſa* here for *res promiſſa*, the antitheſis implying that to be the meaning, viz. The ſcoffers ſay, Where is the promiſe of his coming? Nevertheleſſe we look for a new heaven, and a new earth, according to his promiſe. But here is ſomewhat, (Reader) in the application wherein thou maiſt erre; but be not thou uncharitable in thy cenſure, nor thinke that I am. For although the crying down and condemning the opinion of the *Chiliaſts*, will be found to be neere upon the beginning of the times of the Antichriſtian Apoſtaſie, (which I ſuppoſe to be called the laſt times;) and that the utter burying of that opinion falls within theſe times; yet thou muſt know, firſt, That there is not the like reaſon of the firſt Authors of crying down a truth,

truth, and of thoſe, who led by their authority, take it afterwards, without further examination, for an error. Secondly, to ſcoffe, is one thing, and barely not to believe, is another. Thirdly, it is one thing to deny a promiſe ſimply, and another to deny and queſtion the manner thereof: as alſo, to reject a truth ſincerely propounded, and when it is entangled with errors, as that of the later Chiliaſt may ſeem to have been.

Verſe 4. *pars altera.*

The reaſon of this their unbelief being, becauſe they imagine, there hath never yet, ſince the creation of the world, been any example of ſuch a deſtruction and change enſuing it, as this at the coming of Chriſt ſhould be. For ſince the Fathers ſel aſleep (ſay they) even ſince Adam died, all things have continued as they were from the beginning of the creation. Therefore the expectation of any ſuch change of the world, & the ſtate of things therein as is ſuppoſed is vain and frivolous, and never to be fulfilled.

Touching the Jews, and the impeachment of this opinion amongst them in the later times, I find amongst the Doctois of the Gemara, or gloſſe of their Talmud, (which was finiſhed about 500 years after Chriſt) a tenet of one R. Samuels, אֵין כֵּן הָעוֹלָם דֵּה לְבוֹת דְּמֵיחַ אֱלֹהִי שְׂדֵיחַ כְּלִמְדָּה בְּלִי: I hat there was to be no difference between the preſent ſtate of the world, and the dayes of Meſſiah, but in regard of the bondage under the kingdoms of the Gentiles onely; thereby oppoſing the more ancient opi-

nion and tradition of the renovation of the world. After this time there appears to have been amongst the Jews a ſect of the followers of the opinion of this R. Samuel, which at length was greatly advanced by the authority of

learned *Maimonides*, who having drunk too deep of the Philosophy of *Aristotle*, (wherein he was admirably skillfull) became a champion against the opinion of the worlds renovation to be in the dayes of Messiah; and that upon this ground, *Quod mundus retinet & sequitur consuetudinem suam*; which saying he ascribeth to some other Rabbins of the same opinion before him; which for the sense and meaning is the self same with that here of the scoffers: *All things* (say they) *continue, as they were from the beginning of the creation.* Nevertheless *Aben Ezra*, who lived not long after *Maimonides*, maintained still (as also others did) the contrary, & there are extant certain discourses and tractates amongst them, purposely written of this argument, and confuting the opinion of *Rambam* and his followers; as one called *משיב דבר עלינו* *cali novi*, proving the necessity of the renovation of the world, and directed against cap. 29. lib. 2. of *Maimonides* his *More Nebachim*. Another by *R. Isaac Abarbinel*, *משיב דבר עלינו* *Opera Dei*, (out of *Psal. 66.5.*) wherein all the arguments brought against the renovation are confuted. And no doubt there are more of the like nature, which we know not of.

Verse 5, 6.

But those who suppose this (וְהָיוּ כִּי יִשְׁמַח אֱלֹהִים בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל) that there hath never yet any such destruction or change befallen the creation, and thence conclude, there is nor shall such ever be; they weigh and consider not the universal deluge in the time of Noah, (when the curses laid upon the creature for mans sin

first

firſt ſolemnly took place,) broke his a like deſtruction ſo as to exchange upon the world for the degenerat. on of the creature; and this at the ſecond coming of Chriſt ſhall be for the reſtauration & renovation of the ſame in the glorious liberty of the children of God. For the heavens were of old, and the globe of the earth, conſiſting partly (ἐν ὑδάτι) of water, viz. that of the great deep; & partly (ἐν ὑδάτι) amongſt (d) water, to wit, the clouds and flood-gates of heaven hanging about it, all framed by the word of God: By the which waters (ἐν ὑδάτι) the world which then was, being overwhelmed with water, perſhed, as it is written Gen. 7. 11. ſeq. in the 600. year of Noahs life, in the ſecond month, in the ſeventeenth day of the month were all the fountains of the great deep broken up, & verſ. 18. And the waters; & 21. and all fleſh died.

Verſe 7.

But the heavens and the earth
 (i. e. the world) which is now,

(d) Διὰ ſometimes ſignifies inter, amongſt, or in the miſt of, as if it were δια μέσθ: So Herodotus, διὰ μέσθ, inter inſulas. Howſoever we render the Prepoſition, I ſuppoſe S. Peter by his ἐν ὑδάτι means the ſuperiour water, which together with that of the ſea, or great deep, concurred to the drowning of the world, as appears by the place of Gen. 7. is alleaged.

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by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire (e) at the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men, according to the Prophecie of Daniel. c. 7. who saw a fiery stream issuing and coming forth before the Judge of the world, & the body of the fourth beast burned therewith: And of Esay, c. 66. who saith of that day, That the Lord shall come with fire, & with his chariots like a whirlwind, to render his anger with fury, and his rebukes with flames of fire: And that by fire and by his sword, (i.e. by his sword of fire, as we see) the Lord would plead with all flesh, and the slain of the Lord shall be many. So also Malachy cap. 4. That the great and terrible day shall burn as an oven, and all the proud, and all that do wickedly shall be stubble, which at the coming of that day (f) shall be burnt up.

Verse 8.

But where as I mentioned (saith Saint Peter) the day of judgment, lest ye might mistake it

(e) From this proposition which the judgment to come by fire, hath unto that which was by water in the deluge, Irenaeus calls it *Diluvium ignis*, lib. 5. c. 29. juxta edit. Feuardentii.

(f) It may be it is of this day that the Prophet Esay also speaks, cap. 9. 5. where he saith, that the battel of the Messiah should not be as the battel of the warriour, with
for

for a ſhort day, or a day of few
 hours, I would not, Beloved,
 have you ignorant, that one
 day (g) with the Lord is as a
 thouſand yeers, & a thouſand
 yeers as one day.

confuſed noiſe, and garments
 rolled in blood, but with bur-
 ning and fuel of fire. For the
 old Prophets for the moſt
 part ſpeak of the coming of
 Chriſt indefinitely and in

general, without that diſtinction of firſt and ſecond com-
 ing, which the Goſpel out of *Daniel* hath more clearly
 taught us: And ſo conſequently they ſpoke of the things
 to be at Chriſts coming indefinitely and altogether,
 which we who are now more fully informed by the Re-
 velation of the Goſpel, of a twofold coming, muſt apply
 each of them to his proper time: thoſe things which be-
 fit the ſtate of his firſt coming, unto it, and ſuch things as
 befit the ſtate of his ſecond coming, to the ſecond; and
 what befits both alike, may be applyed unto both.

(g) Thus I expound theſe words by way of pre-occu-
 pation or premunition, becauſe they are the formal words
 of the Jewiſh Doctors, when they ſpeak of the day of
 judgment, or day of Chriſt, as Saint Peter here doth, viz.
 יוֹמֵי מֵלָךְ ה' *una dies Dei S. B. ſicut mille anni.*
 And though they uſe to quote that of the ninth Pſalm,
 (*mille anni in oculis tuis ut dies heſternus*) for confirmation
 thereof, yet are not theſe words formally in the Pſalm.
 So that St. Peter in this paſſage ſeems rather to have had
 reſpect to that common ſaying of the Jews in this argu-
 ment, than to the words of the Pſalm; where the words
 (*one day with the Lord is as a thouſand yeers*) are not, though
 the latter part of the ſentence (*a thouſand yeers as one day*)
 may allude thither; as the Jews alſo were wont to bring
 it, for a confirmation of the former. 2 Theſe words are
 commonly taken as an argument, why God ſhould not be

thought slack in his promise (which follows in the next verse: But the first Fathers took it otherwise; and besides, it proveth it not: for the question is not, whether the time be long or short in respect of God; but whether it be long or short in respect of us; otherwise not 1000, but 100000 yeeres are in the eyes of God no more than one day is to us, and so it would not seem long to God, if the day of judgment should be deferred till then. 3 Let the judicious consider it, whether this passage so prone to be taken in the exposition I have given, yea, and alledged to that purpose, were not some part of a motive to the ze-
litical Anti-Chiliasm (whereof *Eusebius*, whom we trust was none of the least) to be so willing and ready to question the authority of this Epistle, as they did also at the same time of the *Apocalyps*. The pretence against this Epistle was, that it wanted the testimonie of allegation by the first Fathers: But (*Dies Domini sicut mille anni*) quoted both by *Justin Martyr* and *Irenaeus*, is not out of the ninth Psalm, as they took for granted, (for there are no such words, but out of the Epistle of *Peter*, who applyth it to the day of judgment, which he calleth *Dies Domini*, *Quia Epist.* Consider it.

Verse 9.

And though this day be deferred, yet is the Lord not slack concerning his promise, (as some men account slackness, as if he had alter'd his purpose, or means never to performe it) but the cause of this delay, is his long-suffering (a) towards us of the seed of Israel, not wil-

(a) Saint Peter speaks and writes in this Epistle to his
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ling that any ſhould periſh at that day; but that the whole nation ſhould come unto repentance, (b) which, if that day ſhould ſurprize them in their unbelief, muſt inevitably periſh with the reſt of the enemies of Chriſt.

brethren the Jewes, as appears by the firſt verſe of this chapter.

(b) So the ſame Saint Peter in his firſt publick Sermon to his Nation in the Temple, after the ſending of the holy Ghoſt (Act. 3. 19, &c.) exhorts them to repent and

be converted *καὶ ἐπιστρέψατε τὰς ἀμαρτίας ὑμῶν*, for the waſhing away of their ſins, that ſo (*ὅταν αὖ*) thoſe times of reſreſhing and reſtitution of all things which God had ſpoken by the mouth of al his holy Prophets, might come, which till then were to be ſuſpended.

Object. But God could have haſtened the Jewes converſion, if it had pleaſed him.

Reſp. But it ſtood with the œconomy of Gods juſtice, when the Jewes had rejected Chriſt, their expiation, to grant them this grace, until they ſhould have fulfilled a time of penance for all the ſins of their Nation, even from the firſt time they were a people, until the laſt deſtruction of Jeruſalem. For ſince they would none of their pardon and attonement by Chriſt, (with reſpect unto whoſe coming God had ſo long ſpared them; for all their expiation by ſacrifice looked unto him) God would not bate them an ace of the judgment they had merited, but would viſit all the former ſins of their Nation upon them, from the golden Calf, until their crucifying, and finally, rejecting of their Meſſiah.

Verſe 10.

But as for the manner of the coming of this great day of

the Lord, it shall be suddenly and unawares; as a thief in the night, in which the heavens (c) with a crackling noise of fire shall pass away, & the *στρουα* (c) or host of them shall melt with fervent heat; the earth also and the works thereof shall be burned.

(c) What these Heavens are, and why I render *στρουα* the host of them; and how this conflagration is to be understood, I will shew when I have done my Paraphrase.

Verf. 11, 12. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought we to be, in all holy conversation and godliness, to make our selves fire-proof, and such as may abide the day of refining? as namely becometh those who by faith look for, and hasten the coming of the day of the Lord, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the host of them melt with fervent heat. For our life & conversation ought to be suitable to our faith, and we are so to walk, as if that were always present which by faith we look for.

Verf. 13. But this conflagration ended, (whatsoever those scoffers say, who question the promise of Christs second coming) we look according to his promise IIa. 65. & 66. for a new heaven and a new earth, (that is, a new and refined state of the world) wherein righteousness shall dwell, according as the same Prophet saith, cap. 60. 20, 21. The Lord shall be thine everlasting light, & the dayes of thy mourning shall be ended, thy people also shall be all righteous, they shall inherit the land, or earth, for ever.

Verf. 14, 15, 16. Wherefore beloved (seeing that ye look for such things at his coming) be diligent
that

that ye may be found in him in peace, without ſpot and blameleſſe, & account the long ſuffering of God, in the delay thereof to be ſalvation. Even as our beloved brother Paul alſo (one of the Apoſtles of our Lord, who confirmeth theſe words of the holy Prophets) according to the wiſdom given unto him, hath written unto you, enforcing the like exhortation unto holinneſſe of life, from this our faith and experience of the Lord Jeſus his appearing to judgement, which we now make unto you: viz. Heb. 12. 14, 28, 29. As alſo in all his Epiſtles, ſpeaking in them of theſe things, viz. Rom. 2. 4. coll. com. verſ. 5, 6, 7, & 1 Cor. 1. 7, 8, & 3. 13. 2 Cor. 5. 9, 10, 11. in initio, & 7. 1. Phil. 1. 10. & 2. 15, 16. & cap. 3. 10. Colloſſ. 3. 4, 5. 1 Theſſ. 2. 12. & 3. 13. denique 5. 23. 2 Theſſ. 1. 8, 11. 1 Tim. 6. 14, 15. Tit. 2. 12, 13.

How this Conflagration of the world
whereof Saint PETER ſpeaks, and eſpecially of the Heavens, is to be underſtood.

FOR reſolution of this queſtion, I muſt premieſe ſome things, to make the way thereto the more eaſie.

R. 1. That the old Hebrew language wherein the Scripture ſpeaks, there is no one word to expreſſe the compages of the ſuperiour and inferiour bodies, which we call *Mundus*, but theſe two words *Heaven* and *Earth* (שמים וארץ) joynted to
and

and put together, onely so that when Saint *Peter* saith (the World that then was, perished by waters; but the Heavens and Earth that are now, are reserved to fire:) He might as well have said according to his meaning, The Heavens and the Earth which then were, perished by waters, as the World that now is shall by fire. For the words *Heaven* and *Earth* joyned, imply no more in the one (according to the Scriptures notion) than the single word *Mundus* or *World* doth in the other, being applyed to the history of the great deluge: as also, a *New heaven* and a *New earth* is the same notion with that in our expression, where we say a *New World*; that is to say, *Novarum facies, novarum conditio*; which we otherwhile apply to very small, and even particular and domestical changes, when we say, Here is a new World; which the Hebrew would or might express, Here is a new Heaven and a new Earth.

2 That it is not like that any other World, or Heaven and Earth, shall perish by fire, than such a one as heretofore perished by water: for so the *Antithesis* importeth, viz. The World, or Heaven and Earth that then was, perished by water, the Heaven and earth which now is, is reserved for a destruction by fire. Now the World which perished by water was no other than the sublunary World, the Heaven whereof is that which we call Aire, but the Scripture Heaven; which sublunary heaven, together with the earth, was marred by that general deluge; and the creatures belonging to them both either wholly destroyed, or marvel-

marvellouſly corrupted from that they were before: ſuch a World therefore, and no other Heaven and earth, ſhal undergo the ſecond deluge of fire for reſtauration, which before ſuffered the deluge of water for corruption.

3 Obſerve alſo, for the better underſtanding of Saint *Peter's* meaning, That the word *στοιχεῖα* which we in this place are wont to turn Elements, is not like to be underſtood in the notion of the Greek Doctors, whoſe terms and notions the Scripture uſeth not, but otherwiſe divideth the World. Nay further, in this place it cannot be ſo underſtood, for that the Hebrew diviſion of the World into Heaven and Earth is here expreſſed, and the *στοιχεῖα* diſtinguiſhed from them both. But when the whole world is divided into Heaven and Earth *οὐρανὸν καὶ γῆν*, by Earth is meant the Earthen Globe, which Saint *Peter* ſaith is *ἡ οὐρανὸς*, and ſo the water and earth are both included in the ſole name of Earth: In Heaven the Aire is included. Thus three of the Physical Elements are beſtowed. The fourth is the Fire: but this is that which is to burn the *στοιχεῖα*, and ſo none of the *στοιχεῖα* to be burnt. And if any of theſe Elements could be exempted from this diviſion into Heaven and Earth, beſides the Fire, viz. the Aire, yet could not that, nor any of them alone be *στοιχεῖα* in Saint *Peter*: For *στοιχεῖα* notes more than one. It muſt needs therefore be, that *στοιχεῖα* here meaneth ſomething elſe. Let us ſee if we can find out what it is. Mark then Saint *Peter's* order, *ἀποκαταστήσει τοὺς στοιχεῖα* then *καὶ τὸ πᾶν τὸ κτίον*.

By

by which correspondence it should seeme that *עֲרֻכָּה* should be some furniture belonging to *caelum*, as *מִן הָאָרֶץ* are the buildings & whole furniture of creatures belonging to *terra*; which furniture of both, but especially that of the Heaven the Scripture calls *עֲרֻכָּה* the host of them, Gen. 2. 1. The heavens & the earth were finished, *וַיְהִי עֲרֻכָּהּ* and all the host of them. LXX. *ἡ κοίτη καὶ οὐρανὸς*. Vulg. *Ornatus eorum*. Nay, seeing the whole world is nothing else but the heaven and the earth, and what is contained in them, (i.e.) *exercitus eorum*: and seeing heaven and earth are both here distinctly named, and *מִן הָאָרֶץ* put for the host of the earth; it must needs be that *עֲרֻכָּה*, named as distinct things from all three, should note the host of heaven: And so the meaning of Saint Peter should be, when he saith *οὐρανὸς καὶ εὐχρίστης*, as if he had said, *οὐρανὸς καὶ εὐχρίστης τῷ οὐρανῷ*, the heavens and the host thereof; or *τῷ οὐρανῷ καὶ εὐχρίστης*, as he saith, *γῆ καὶ οὐρανὸς ἡ ἀρχὴ*, the earth and the works therein. But how, will some man say, should *εὐχρίστης* come to have this notion? I answer thus, The Hebrew verb *עָרַךְ* signifieth, *in ordine militari sto, incedo*, and so answers to the Greek verb *τάχω*, which is expounded, *in τάξει ἑστῆς ἰστας*, i.e. *in ordine militari incedo*, Vide Scap. ex Etymolog. Accordingly the LXX. render the Hebrew *עָרַךְ* *ἐστῆς ἰστας*, i.e. *in praecinctu sto, instructa acie sto*. Now if the verb *עָרַךְ* signifie the same with the Greek *τάχω*, why may not the Hebrew Noun *עָרֻכָּה* (which we turn *exercitus*) be rendered *εὐχρίστης*; the Hellenists or Greekish Jews, as in other words so here following the Etymo-

Etyymology from $\sigma\epsilon\lambda\gamma\omega$, & having eye more to their own native language, than to the uſe of Greeke. It would be long to ſhew in how many words they, and the Greek Scriptures written according to their Dialect, uſe notions w^{ch} the Greek uſed not; (*viz.*) reſpecting ſome conformity or other in their own tongue. The works of the learned in ſacred Criticiſme are of late full of ſuch obſervations, whereby many difficulties and obſcurities in Scripture become clear and eaſie. Nevertheleſs the Gentile-Greeks themſelves uſe $\sigma\iota\gamma\alpha\varsigma$ and $\sigma\omicron\iota\gamma\alpha\varsigma$ (which come of the ſame verbe $\sigma\epsilon\lambda\gamma\omega$) in the ſame ſenſe we plead for, *viz.* for *ordo militaris*, Military array; why may not then the *Helleniſts* (ſo the **Greek Jewes* are called) do ſo with $\sigma\omicron\iota\gamma\epsilon\lambda\omega\iota\varsigma$, be- ing for the etymology every way as fit, ſeeing alſo they are otherwiſe wont to permute ſignifications from vicinity of ſound.

* See th^t Syriack
Act. 9. 20. where
 $\epsilon\lambda\lambda\eta\gamma\iota\sigma\tau\alpha\iota$ are
turned *Judei*
qui loquuntur
Graece.

For a further confirmation of this notion of $\sigma\omicron\iota\gamma\epsilon\lambda\omega\iota\varsigma$ I contend for, I will adde what I have met with to that purpoſe. *Schickardus*, a learned Profeſſor of the Oriental languages, at *Tabingen*, in his *Beſkinath happeruſhim*, pag. 44. hath diſcovered out of *Rambans*, or *R. Moſes ben Nachmans* Preface in *Peruſche baſtaroth*, two paſſages taken out of the Chaldee copy of the *Wiſdom of Solomon*, which that *Rabbi* had ſeen: whereby he ſaid *Schickard* proveth againſt *St. Jerome*, that the Greek is not the Original, but was tranſlated out of Chaldee. The paſſages which this *Ramban* quoteth thence are *cap. 7. 5, 6, 7.* and part of the 8. And again, verſ. 17, 18, 19, 20, 21. In the laſt of which quotations, becauſe there is in the Greek $\epsilon\gamma\gamma\epsilon\lambda\alpha\iota\varsigma\ \sigma\omicron\iota\gamma\epsilon\lambda\omega\iota\varsigma$, I greedily looked what word in the Caldee answered here to $\sigma\omicron\iota\gamma\epsilon\lambda\omega\iota\varsigma$, which I found to be ܐܬܪܐ , which thoſe who have ſkill know to ſignifie the Planets, 12. ſignes or conſtellations of Heaven, as being the ſame with the Hebrew כוכב . $\sigma\omicron\iota\gamma\epsilon\lambda\omega\iota\varsigma$ therefore here are Stars and Planets,

* have ſince
looked in the
Preface of

C

which

much

Ramban, where I found those Chaldee passages mentioned, which the Rabbins translate into Hebrew, and for the Chaldee which answereth to

עֲשֵׂה נָא
לְפָנַי
וּמִן הַחֶמֶד
סֵלֶם

which I shall not need prove to be the host of the Ethereall Heavens; yea, and perhaps too, $\alpha\epsilon\tau\epsilon\rho$ and $\nu\phi\lambda\alpha\varsigma$ are derived of the verb $\beta\lambda\epsilon\omega$, *ire*, as *corax* is of *σειω*. Now we know the Scriptures make mention of three Heavens; first, the Aire or sublunary Heaven: secondly, the Ethereall and starry Heaven: thirdly, the Heaven of Glory, or Emperreall Heaven. Every of these Heavens have their host or army: the host of the heaven of glory, or the third, are the Angels and blessed Spirits: the host of the Ethereall heavens are the Stars and Planets: the host of the Acreal, or sublunary heaven, are either visible, as the clouds of heaven, $\νεφελαι\ \tau\omicron\ \nu\phi\lambda\alpha\varsigma$, and other meteors, as also the rest of the creatures mansioning therein, as the fowles of the heaven, $\περιηρ\ \tau\omicron\ \nu\phi\lambda\alpha\varsigma$ or invisible, *viz.* the wicked Spirits and Devils, whose Prince Satan, is called *the Prince of the power of the Aire*, Eph. 2. 2. and his host $\kappa\omicron\sigma\mu\omicron\chi\eta\tau\omicron\varsigma$, rulers of the world, i. e. the sublunary world; and $\tau\alpha\ \pi\upsilon\epsilon\mu\alpha\tau\iota\alpha$ *the πνευματῖς in τοῖς οὐρανοῖς*, wicked spirits in heavenly places, *viz.* in the lowest or sublunary heavens, Eph. 6. 12. And whether S. Paul, Gal. 4. 8, 9. and Col. 2. 8, &c. includes not some of those under his $\sigma\omicron\chi\eta\alpha\ \tau\omicron\ \nu\omicron\mu\omicron\iota$, I cannot affirm: let the learned further consider it; when namely he speaks to Gentiles; and of Gentiles, and not Jews.

Having hitherto prepar'd the way, let us now come closer home to *S. Peter*, whose words evidently import, that some of these *heavens*, or al of them, shal suffer a conflagration at the day of Christ. Not all of them, for, who ever put the Emphyreal heaven into that reckoning? And for the Ethereal heaven, he that considereth the supereminent nature and immensity thereof, and of those innumerable bodies therein, in regard of which the whole sublunary world is but a point or center, & that it no way can be proved that ever those bodies received any curse for mans sin, or contagion by the worlds deluge, or that any enemies of God dwell

dwell in them to pollute them: he that considereth this wil not easily be induced to believe that the fire of the day of judgement should burn them. It remaineth therefore that the sublunary heavens only, with their *στοιχεῖα* are to be the subject of this conflagration.

These heavens (saith S. Peter) *λυθίσονται*, i. e. *solventur*, and their *στοιχεῖα* shall melt with fervent heat: It is a Metaphor taken from the refining of mettals, *quæ igne solventur ut purificentur*: so that *οἱ οὐρανοὶ πυρὶ μανὶ λυθίσονται*, is as much as *Cæli igne adhibito conflagrabitur*. This to be the meaning of *λυθίσονται* appears, because S. Peter himself interprets *solvi* to be *liquefieri*. For having in the tenth verse said *στοιχεῖα λυθίσονται*, (i. e.) *solventur*, he in the twelfth verse repeating it sayes, *στοιχεῖα ταλίσονται*, (i. e.) *liquefient*; Now melting is for refining and purifying. Nor is the word *πυρὶ μανὶ* averse from this notion, the L X X. using *πυρὶ* for the Hebrew *אֵשׁ* as in the Psalms more than once: *The words of the Lord are as refined silver*, L X X. *ἀργύριον πεινυωμένον*, Psal. 12. and so elsewhere. But when the sublunary heaven shall be thus refined, even the Ethereal lights of the Stars, of the Sun and Moon, &c. will appear to those on earth much more glorious than now they do, as sending their rayes through a purer *Medium*; so that all the world to us-ward shall be as it were renewed.

As for *παράλυσονται* (or *passing away*) verse 10. it is an Hebraisme, signifying any change, or going of a thing from the state wherein it was, and answers to the verbe *תִּפְּחַ*, which signifieth both *transire* and *permutari*, as *פָּחַ* in Chaldianisme doth. And Schindler notes that Psal. 102 the Arabick for *תִּפְּחַ* *mutabuntur*, hath *וְתִפְּחַן* *transibunt*. In the twelfth verse it is expounded by *λυθίσονται*, But *λυθίσονται* I have already shewed is commuted with *ταλίσονται*; they therefore all three of them signifie one

and the same thing; and I see no reason why we should imagine a greater *emphasis* in παρελεύσονται for an utter abolition in the destruction by fire, than is before implied in ἀπαλόντο, when he spake of the destruction by water: *ὅτε κόσμος (inquit) ὕδατι κατοκλινοθεὶς ἀπάλειο.*

But what shall become of the invisible host, which I named as part of the *σχοιῆα* of this sublunary heaven, viz. those *πνευματικά της σαρκας*, the army of wicked and unclean spirits: shall the fire of the last judgement touch these? I answer: Though the operation of the fire shall not be upon them to burn them, yet shall they also suffer by this fiery judgement, being thereby to be exiled and dejected from those high mansions, and bestowed in some lower place: for so that of *Jude* seemeth to imply, *The Angels* (saith he) *which kept not their first estate, but left their own* (or proper) *habitation, he hath reserved to* (be bound with) *everlasting chaines of darkness, at the judgement of the great day.* Vide Piscat. in hunc locum.

And this seemes to me to be the most literal and unforded exposition of this description of Saint *Peter*, of the *heaven and earths* conflagration at the day of Christ, and so to be preferred before any other.

But if a *Prophetical* strain or scheme may here be admitted, there is another way of explication, which yet in the conclusion will come to the same purpose the former did, although the way thereto be not the same. And certainly our Saviour in the Gospel describing the coming of this day, useth a *Prophetical* expression: *The Sunne* (saith he) *shall be darkened, and the Moon shall not give her light, and the Stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of heaven shall be shaken:* For if this be taken literally, whither shall the stars fall from heaven, which are either as big, or many times bigger than the globe of the earth, where shall be room

room for them? if ſuch a ſcheme there be ſuppos'd in St. *Peters* deſcription, th'explication may be after this manner.

Mundus, or the *World*, (to omit other particular exceptions) is according to the Scriptures uſe, either *Mundus continens*, or *Mundus contentus*, (give me leave to uſe thoſe termes for diſtinction ſake:) By *Mundus continens* I mean the compages and frame of the *Physical heaven & earth*, wherein the reſt of the creatures are contained: By *Mundus contentus*, the ſtate or body of the inhabitants or Kingdoms of the earth. Now to whatſoever the notion of *Mundus* is appliable, there is alſo ſuppoſed to be an heaven and earth, as being the names and parts whereby the Scriptures expreſs the *World*. The *heaven* then of this *Political world* is the ſovereignty or ſovereign part thereof, whoſe hoſt and ſtars are the powers ruling in the *World*: In the higheſt place *Gods* and *Idols*; next, *Kings*, *Princes*, *Peers*, *Counſellours*, *Magiſtrates*, and other ſuch lights ſhining in the Firmament. And at ſuch a meaning and no other (it being an Oriental notion) may aime (for ought I can ſee) that ſuppoſed ſtuporous ſtyle of *Sapores* King of *Persia* to *Conſtantinus* the Emperour; *Rex Regum Sapores, frater ſolis & luna, particeps (i.e. ſocius) ſyderum, Conſtantio fratri ſalutem*. But to go on: *Earth* is the *Pezantry* or *vulgus hominum*, together with the terreſtrial creatures ſerving the uſe of man: Of ſuch an Heaven, as this is, the Lord ſpeaketh in the Propheſie of *Haggai*, cap. 2. v. 6. *Yet once it is a little while, and I will ſhake all Nations, and the deſire of all Nations ſhall come*. And again v. 21. *I will ſhake the heavens and the earth, and I will overthrow the throne of Kingdoms, and I will deſtroy the ſtrength of the Kingdoms of the Heathen, &c.* Of ſuch an heaven and earth ſpeaketh *Feremy*, c. 4. v. 23. *I be-held the earth, and it was without form and void, (הוּר ובוּהו) and the heavens, & they had no light: viz. as if the World were turn'd into the old Chaos again, Gen. cap. 1. See the reſt*

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rest which followeth. Of such Heavens & Earth speaketh the Lord in *Esay*, cap. 51. v. 15, 16. namely, of the Heavens and Earth of the World, or state of Israel. *I am* (saith he) *the Lord thy God, who divided the sea, (to wit, the Red sea) when the waters thereof roared; the Lord of Hosts in his name: And put my Word (i.e. my Law) in thymouth, and covered thee in the shadow of my hand, (i.e. protected thee in thy march to Canaan) that I might plant the Heavens, and lay the foundations of the Earth; (i.e. make thee a State, and build thee into a Political World) and say unto Sion, thou art my people.* Of such a kind of Heaven speaks the same Prophet, cap. 34. v. 2, 4, 5. *The indignation of the Lord is upon all Nations, and his fury upon all their Armies, &c. And all the Host of Heaven shall be dissolved, and the Heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll, and their host shall fall down, as the leaf falleth off from the Vine, and as a falling figge from the figge-tree. For my sword shall be bathed in Heaven: Behold it shall come down on Idumea, &c.* See the rest, & know that this destruction of Edom is prophesied of in no lesse hyperbolical a strain by *Obadiah*, and *Jeremy* cap. 49. from v. 7. to 22. *Ezek.* 35. v. 4. & 25. 12. which I note, lest any man wondering at the *hyperbole* of this of *Esay*, should think it appliable only to the day of judgement. And that such schemes as these were usual to the Nations of the Orient, may appear not only by the Chymical Philosophy derived thence, (which makes heaven & earth & stars in every thing) but from the testimony of *Moses Maimonides*, who (*more Nebochim part. 2. cap. 29.*) affirms that the Arabians in his time in their vulgar speech, when they would express that a man was fallen into some great calamity or adversity, used to say, *Calum ejus super terram ejus cecidit*: Compare *Lament.* 2. 1. No question these schemes were as familiar to them, as our Poets strains and expressions are to us, though of another *genius*: Ours are borrowed from fables, stories,

ſtories, places; theirs, more from the frame of the World, the Sunne, Moon, Stars, and Elements, &c.

If ſuch a notion of *Cælum* and *Terra* may have place in this place of *Peter*, (and why may he not uttering a Propheſie borrow a Poetical ſtrain?) it may eaſily appear what Heaven and Earth the fire at Chriſts ſecond coming ſhall burn up and conſume, *viz.* the heaven and the earth of the contained world, ſuch as thoſe which the former judgement by water over-whelmed and deſtroyed; the VWorld of wicked ſtates and men, high ones & low ones, princes and peſants, man & beaſt, according to that twice repeated paſſage, *Eſay 2. 11, 17.* (which the ancient Jewes interpreted of the day of judgement) *The loftineſſe of man ſhall be bowed down, & the haughtineſſe of men ſhall be made low, & the Lord alone ſhall be exalted that day: And the Idols* (theſe are part of the hoſt of heaven we ſee the Apoſtaſie ſpeak of) *he ſhall utterly aboliſh.* And of ſuch of the latter times heavens and ~~ſcenes~~ *as theſe, it mattereth not though we* underſtand an abſolute deſtruction (*viz.* of ſo much as ſhall be burned) as was in the deluge of *Noah*. And ſo likewiſe of the earth and works thereof. But whereas by the univerſal deluge, though only the *Mundus contentus* periſhed, yet notwithstanding the *Mundus continens* was therewith corrupted and depraved: In the deſtruction of fire it ſhall be otherwiſe, for the world of wicked ones being deſtroyed, the Heaven and the Earth which contained them ſhall be purged and refined, for the righteous to dwell therein. This Expoſition I put but in the ſecond place, becauſe where the proper ſenſe of the letter may be kept, I prefer it before any other.

To conclude, if any there yet be, whom neither of the former expoſitions can ſatiſfie, but will needs have the fire and burning here ſpoken of, to be that whereby the World is to be utterly annihilated; I could answer, that the day

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of

of judgement is a thousand yeers; and this fire, though it be to be *in iudicio*, *in that day*, yet shall it not be in the beginning, but end thereof; the beginning being but a destruction of the enemies of Christ, and the Kingdome of Satan, and then a restauration: The end, a destruction of the whole creature it self by utter annihilation; and then *St. Peters* words, ver. 13. to be construed after this manner, *That howsoever the Heavens and the Earth shall at length be dissolved by fire, nevertheless before that shall be, we look for a new Heaven and a new Earth* (i. e. a new World or restauration) *to precede this abolition, according to his promise, Esay, 65. & 66.*

But such an exposition, me thinks, would not suit so well with that which I take to be *St. Peters* chiefest scope in this passage; nor with the words of the holy Prophets he pointeth at, which seem to speak only of such a fire, which should precede a restauration, and not of that which should cause an utter abolition of the World: And as concerning such an utter abolition of the whole frame of Heaven and Earth, after the Oeconomy of the Redemption & victory of Christ shall be finished, it seemeth to me a mystery which hath no bottome. Howsoever, I am not perswaded this place of *St. Peter* should mean any such thing. Those passages, *Job* 14. 12. *Psal.* 102. 26. and *Apoc.* 20. 11. may seem to be of more moment. And if any such annihilation shall be, it stands more with reason it should be by the immediate power of God, without the instrument of any creature, than by fire; and that he who at first brought it out of nothing without any creatures help, should reduce it to nothing again without the help of any creature

Δόξα τῷ Θεῷ τῷ παντοκράτορι.